New Systems

The only new transit agency to report in 2005 is the Columbia County Public Transportation (CCPT). Initially when established, CCPT had no taxing authority and relied on grants to provide service, but has since established a tax to relieve the burden of relying solely on grants. Columbia County Public Transportation represents the 28th transit agency in Washington State.

Efforts to Increase Public Transportation Tax Rates

Finding ways to increase services are difficult prospects for many transit agencies. One common way to do this is by taxation within the service boundaries. Public Transit Benefit Areas can tax from 0.1 to 0.9 percent on sales, only upon voter approval.

Two different elections to increase taxes that fund public transportation occurred this past year. The first election occurred within C-TRAN, a Public Transportation Benefit Area. The voters within the boundaries of C-TRAN approved an increase of 0.2 percent in September that coincides with other changes made at C-TRAN this past year that will be discussed in later sections. Combined with past sales tax increases, C-TRAN now levies 0.5 percent to fund public transportation.

The second election was in November 2005 when Columbia County Public Transportation (CCPT) passed, by voter approval, a 0.4 percent sales and use tax to provide funding for some of their services. Columbia County Public Transportation is a County Transit Agency meaning that their service boundaries include everything within the County limits.

Local Sales and Use Tax Authorized for Public Transportation

	Transit System	Authority*	Last Changed	Sales Tax Rate
1	Asotin County Transit	PTBA	2004	0.2%
2	Ben Franklin Transit	PTBA	2002	0.6%
3	Clallam Transit System	PTBA	2000	0.6%
4	Columbia County Public Transportation	CTA	2005	0.4%
5	C-TRAN (Clark)	PTBA	2005	0.5%
6	Community Transit (Snohomish)	PTBA	2001	0.9%
7	Cowlitz Transit Authority (CUBS)	PTBA	1987	0.1%
8	Everett Transit	City	2004	0.6%
9	Garfield County Transportation[1]	UTBA	N/A	0.0%
10	Grant Transit	PTBA	1996	0.2%
11	Grays Harbor Transportation Authority	CTA	2000	0.6%
12	Intercity Transit (Thurston)	PTBA	2002	0.6%
13	Island Transit	PTBA	2000	0.6%
14	Jefferson Transit Authority	PTBA	2000	0.6%
15	King County Metro Transit	County	2000	0.8%
16	Kitsap Transit	PTBA	2001	0.8%
17	Link Transit (Chelan/Douglas)	PTBA	1990	0.4%
18	Mason County Transportation Authority	PTBA	2001	0.6%
19	Pacific Transit	PTBA	1979	0.3%
20	Pierce Transit	PTBA	2002	0.6%
21	Pullman Transit[2]	City	1978	0.0%
22	Skagit Transit	PTBA	1992	0.2%
23	Sound Transit[3]	Regional	1996	0.4%
24	Spokane Transit Authority	PTBA	2004	0.6%
25	Twin Transit (Lewis)	PTBA	2004	0.2%
26	Valley Transit (Walla Walla)	PTBA	1980	0.3%
27	Whatcom Transportation Authority	PTBA	2002	0.6%
28	Yakima Transit	City	1980	0.3%

**PTBA = Public Transportation Benefit Area; UTBA = Unincorporated Transportation Benefit Area; CTA = County Transportation Authority.*

[1]Garfield County Transportation is financed by locally generated tax revenues rather than sales tax.

[2]Pullman Transit receives two percent of local utility taxes.

[3]In November 1996, voters approved local funding for Sound Transit that included a 0.4 percent local sales and use tax, a 0.3 percent motor vehicle excise tax, and a rental car tax to finance the construction and operation of the regional transit system.

Efforts to Create or Expand Transit Districts

Changing a service boundary requires the vote of a governing body, and impacts the service delivery of a transit agency. The following transit system boundaries were changed in 2005:

- C-TRAN recently decreased their boundaries to serve only the City of Vancouver and its Urban Grown Boundary, in addition to the city limits of Camas, Washougal, Battle Ground, Ridgefield, La Center, and Yacolt. Previously, C-TRAN served all of Clark County. These changes were initiated by C-TRAN's Public Transportation Improvement Conference (PTIC). The boundary changes in conjunction with other changes throughout the transit agency will be discussed further in C-TRAN's individual transit section.
- Ben Franklin Transit annexed the unincorporated area of Finley into their transit system, expanding their service population and boundaries.

New Federal Guidelines

Congress passed new transportation legislation in 2005 that will impact public transportation in various ways. The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), establishes new criteria for distribution of federal funds that affect public transportation. Overall, SAFETEA-LU provides $286.4 billion in guaranteed funding for federal surface transportation programs over six years through FY 2009, including $52.6 billion for federal transit programs. This represents a 46 percent increase over transit funding guaranteed in the previous transportation bill, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21). The sections of the bill impact all aspects of public transportation including: special needs populations that rely on public transportation, coordination and planning, safety and security, environmental provisions, alternative fuels, intermodal transportation, and tribal transportation needs. Some of the SAFETEA-LU sections introduce new guidelines and programs, and other programs are enhanced through more direct funding.

Federal and State Grants

The new federal guidelines for grant distribution (SAFETEA-LU) and state grants help transit agencies to provide service to all levels of the community, particularly special needs individuals. For many individuals who use public transportation, secure funding will mean the difference between well timed bus routes, and a poorly coordinated bus system.

In 2006, The Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT) staff led a nationally recognized effort with transportation providers and planning organizations across the state to implement a new federal planning requirement for public transportation grant recipients.

The recently passed SAFETEA-LU requires the establishment of locally developed, coordinated public transportation plans for all human services transportation programs. Applicants for WSDOT's public transportation grant program are required to participate in the planning process with their local Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) or Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Stakeholder groups that include the RTPOs/MPOs, public transportation providers, non-profit human services agencies, health providers, large employers, and consumers will develop and implement the plan.

Because of ACCT's coordination efforts over the past several years, Washington State was able to get a quick jump on meeting the new planning requirements. Many areas in the state already had a coordinated transportation coalition in their community with most of the required stakeholders. Washington's leadership has been recognized by both the Federal Transit Administration and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. In the spring of 2006 ACCT was invited to present their planning process at the Community Transportation Association of America Expo.

A draft of the plans is due in the fall of 2006 in order for providers to apply for grants and will be incorporated into the RTPO/MPO comprehensive plans by July of 2007.

2005 Federal Funding

Area	Funding	Source	Purpose
Seattle-Everett	$79,514,768	Section 5307	Formula
Spokane	$6,254,968	Section 5307	Formula
Marysville	$1,134,185	Section 5307	Formula
Kennewick-Richland	$1,636,808	Section 5307	Formula
Yakima	$1,333,439	Section 5307	Formula
Bremerton	$1,750,485	Section 5307	Formula
Olympia-Lacey	$1,429,865	Section 5307	Formula
Bellingham	$1,028,534	Section 5307	Formula
Longview	$700,753	Section 5307	Formula
Mount Vernon	$515,719	Section 5307	Formula
Wenatchee	$630,619	Section 5307	Formula
Seattle	$21,767,955	Section 5309	Fixed Guideway
Seattle/ Central Link	$79,360,000	Section 5309	New Starts
Sound Transit/ Sounder Commuter Rail	$3,968,000	Section 5309	New Starts
Community Transit	$971,779	Section 5309	Bus and Bus Facilities
Edmonds Multimodal Facility	$971,779	Section 5309	Bus and Bus Facilities
King County Metro	$4,858,891	Section 5309	Clean Air Buses
King County Metro	$1,943,557	Section 5309	Airfield Transfer Area
King County Metro	$1,943,557	Section 5309	First Hill Park & Ride Lot
Pierce Transit	$971,779	Section 5309	Bus and Bus Facilities
Ben Franklin Transit	$1,020,367	Section 5309	Bus and Bus Facilities
Intercity Transit	$971,779	Section 5309	Bus and Bus Facilities
Whatcom Transit	$1,943,557	Section 5309	Bus and Bus Facilities
Kitsap Transit	$971,779	Section 5309	Bus and Bus Facilities
Link Transit	$777,422	Section 5309	Bus and Bus Facilities
Clallam Transit/ Int'l Gateway Center	$971,779	Section 5309	Bus and Bus Facilities
Grant Transit	$777,422	Section 5309	Bus and Bus Facilities
Jefferson Transit	$583,067	Section 5309	Bus and Bus Facilities
WA State Small Bus	$3,887,113	Section 5309	Buses
Statewide Rural	$4,429,004	Section 5311	Formula
Statewide Job Access			
FY 2004	$4,708,484	Section 3037	JARC Allocation
FY 2005	$4,782,450	Section 3037	JARC Allocation
Total*	**$238,511,633**		

**Excludes Vancouver Section 5307 Formula share with Portland, Oregon. In addition excludes Asotin Section 5307 Formula share with Lewiston, Idaho.*

Local Funding

Statewide, **local tax revenues increased 10.55 percent** from 2004. Local taxes decreased to represent 75 percent of total operating revenues in 2005, down 1 percent of total operating revenues in 2004.

- 16 of the 28 transit systems increased their local tax revenues by over 10 percent from 2004. Representing the largest increases over 2004, in descending order were: Everett Transit, 97.42 percent; Twin Transit, 74.50 percent; Spokane Transit, 72.98 percent; Pacific Transit, 21.72 percent; and Intercity Transit, 20.72.
- All transit agencies increased local tax revenues by at least 5 percent, from 2004, except for Yakima Transit that increased local tax revenues by 2.32 percent over the same time period.

Statewide, **farebox revenues increased 2.36 percent** from 2004. Fares represented 10 percent of the total operating revenue for 2005.

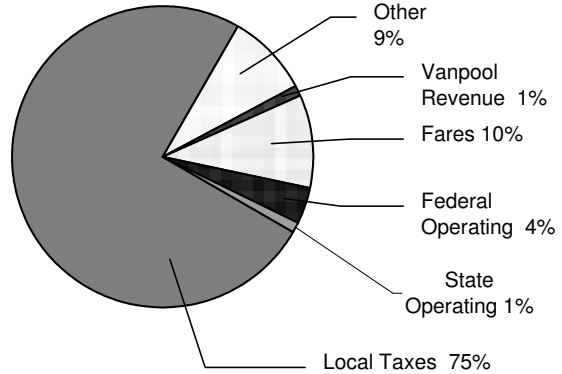
- Mason County Transportation Authority (MCTA) increased their farebox revenues 52.40 percent from 2004. It should be noted that MCTA only collects fares from service outside Mason County.
- Nine transit agencies saw their farebox revenues decrease in 2005. Of these transit agencies, Everett Transit and Twin Transit offset their farebox reductions with increases in local tax revenues.

Statewide, **vanpool revenue increased 14.17 percent** from 2004.

- Statewide vanpool revenue represented 1 percent of total operating revenue, in 2005. This is a decrease from the 2 percent that vanpool revenue represented for total operating revenue in 2004. This is illustrated on the following *Sources of Operating Revenues, 2005*, graph

The graph, *Sources of Operating Revenues, 2005*, shows the percentage share of each revenue source.

Sources of Operating Revenues, 2005



Statewide Levels of Service

According to the U.S. Census Population projections for 2005, approximately 5,275,904 residents in Washington State lived within the boundaries of a transit agency. The decrease of 2.2 percent, from 86.5 percent in 2004 to 84.3 percent in 2005, illustrates this minor decrease. This is partly due to the boundary reductions by one of the urban transit agencies, in addition to methodology changes involving the calculation of transit system populations. Comparatively, people living within the boundaries of King County Metro Transit represented approximately one-third, 34.27 percent, of the population living within transit agency boundaries.

Statewide, fixed route revenue vehicle hours increased by 6.88 percent while revenue vehicle miles for fixed route systems decreased by 7.50 percent, in 2005. Route deviated systems increased their revenue vehicle hours by 25.35 percent, and also increased revenue vehicle miles by 22.91 percent over the same period. Demand response systems also experienced an increase in revenue vehicle hours and revenue vehicle miles in 2005. Vanpool systems continued this upward trend by increasing their revenue vehicle miles.

The table, *Revenue Vehicle Hours by Service, 2002-2005*, depicts the general upward trend of revenue vehicle hours across all services in Washington State, over a four year period.

Revenue Vehicle Hours by Service, 2002-2005

	2002	2003	2004	2005
Fixed Route	5,547,714	5,768,016	5,520,813	5,896,431
Route Deviated	97,317	102,381	100,962	126,555
Demand Response	1,568,064	1,624,648	1,761,381	1,834,347
Vanpool	21,500,697	21,825,885	23,050,757	25,145,813
Passenger Ferry	4,855	5,723	5,746	6,556
Commuter Rail	7,595	9,769	11,732	14,201
Light Rail	11,537	14,597	21,107	20,179
Total	**28,737,779**	**29,351,019**	**30,472,498**	**33,044,082**

Statewide, **fixed route revenue vehicle hours increased 6.88 percent** from 2004.

- Link Transit experienced an increase of 19.53 percent in revenue vehicle hours in their fixed route services and a 4.09 percent increase in revenue vehicle miles; a 23.62 percent total increase.
- Everett Transit also increased their fixed route vehicle revenue miles and hours with a combined increase of 22.62 percent.

Statewide, **route deviated revenue vehicle hours increased 25.35 percent** from 2004.

- Route deviated revenue vehicle hours increased in 2005 for all transit agencies, except for Valley Transit and Jefferson Transit, showing decreases of 10.36 and 0.16 percent respectively.

Statewide, **demand response revenue vehicle hours and miles increased 8.41 percent** from 2004.

- Twin Transit increased their demand response revenue vehicle hours 97.7 percent from 2004, due to increased ridership on Paratransit services.

- Several transit agencies showed increases in demand response services of at least 15 percent from 2004, including: Ben Franklin Transit, Clallam Transit, Community Transit, Intercity Transit, and Island Transit. Their percentage increases from 2004 were: 20.46, 17.69, 29.88, 21.14, and 31.83, respectively.

Statewide, **vanpool services increased 9.09 percent** from 2004.

- 75 percent of transit agency vanpool services experienced increases of at least 3.5 percent from 2004 service levels.
- C-TRAN phased out their vanpool program, resulting in a 99.02 percent decrease of revenue vehicle miles from 2004.
- 25 percent of transit agencies using vanpool services saw increases in revenue vehicle miles of at least 30 percent. Mason County Transportation Authority saw the largest increase of 62.07 percent in vanpool revenue vehicle miles from 2004.

Comparing revenue vehicle hours among other modes of transportation from 2004 to 2005, passenger ferry systems increased 14.10 percent, commuter rail services increased 21.05 percent, and light rail decreased 4.40 percent.

Ridership

Ridership in 2005 increased 1.80 percent from 2004. This represents the addition of approximately three million passenger trips over one year, totaling 173,609,379 passenger trips for 2005, for all modes of public transportation. The following table, *Passenger Trips by Service, 2002-2005*, shows general increases throughout the past four years by service.

Statewide, **fixed route passenger trips increased 1.15 percent** from 2004.

- Fixed route ridership represents 91.67 percent of overall passenger trips in 2005. This is approximately the same percentage of total passenger trips that fixed route represented in 2004.

Passenger Trips by Service, 2002-2005

	2002	2003	2004	2005
Fixed Route	148,833,116	150,704,205	157,359,130	159,162,843
Route Deviated	893,637	924,109	866,842	1,029,901
Demand Response	4,561,231	4,837,895	5,152,069	5,261,413
Vanpool	4,400,484	4,486,441	4,640,835	5,174,427
Passenger Ferry	288,984	338,520	388,712	453,600
Commuter Rail	817,405	751,163	955,298	1,267,973
Light Rail	366,787	670,383	1,193,162	1,259,222
Total	**160,161,644**	**162,712,716**	**170,556,048**	**173,609,379**

- Fixed route ridership increased from 2004 for urban, small city, and rural systems, being 0.9 percent, 39.20 percent, and 2.27 percent respectively.

Statewide, **route deviated passenger trips increased 18.81 percent** from 2004.

Statewide, **demand response passenger trips increased 2.12 percent** from 2004.

- Demand response ridership increased in all system sizes. Passenger trips among systems serving urban areas increased 1.09 percent, whereas passenger trips among systems serving small urban areas increased 3.44 percent, and passenger trips among the least populated rural systems increased 4.77 percent.

Statewide, **vanpool passenger trips increased 11.50 percent** from 2004.

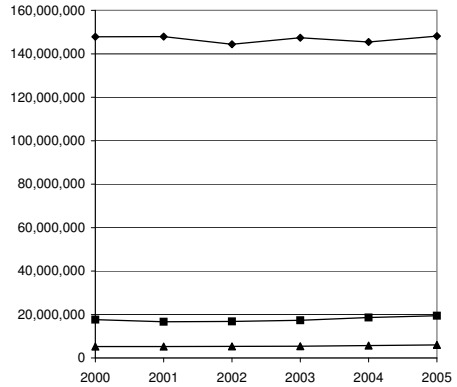
- Skagit Transit, Yakima Transit, and Mason County Transportation Authority significantly expanded their vanpool programs by increasing passenger trips over 2004 levels by 81.27 percent, 75.25 percent, and 74.12 percent respectively.

- C-TRAN continued the phase out of their vanpool program with a decrease in vanpool passenger trips by 96.25 percent in 2005, totaling 988 passenger trips. Vanpool was completely phased out by the end of 2005.

Passenger trips for passenger ferry, commuter rail, and light rail all experienced increases in 2005 of at least 5 percent. Passenger ferry ridership increased 16.69 percent, compared to commuter rail that increased ridership by 32.73 percent, and light rail that increased ridership by 5.54 percent.

The graph, *Total Passenger Trips, 2000-2005*, illustrates ridership trends over 6 years from 2000 to 2005, according to system size. Ridership has followed a general trend of gradually increasing over the past few years.

Total Passenger Trips, 2000-2005



The most significant changes in ridership occurred in several different modes across the state.

- Mason County Transportation Authority increased their vanpool ridership 74.12 percent while increasing their system wide farebox revenue by 52.40 percent from 2004.
- Twin Transit increased their demand response ridership by 35.23 percent over 2004 levels.
- Link Transit and Island Transit increased their deviated route ridership levels by over 50 percent from 2004. In addition, Link Transit increased their farebox revenue by nearly 8 percent whereas Island Transit continues to be the only transit agency in the state that has free fares.

Expenditures

Operating Expenses

Operating expenses for public transportation in Washington State increased 12.34 percent from 2004 expenses. Increased fuel and insurance costs contributed to overall expenses for many transit agencies. Operating expenses increased for all service modes from 2004. The following are operating costs for services in 2005:

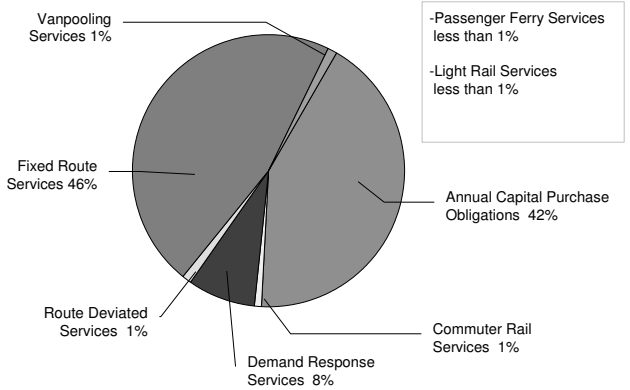
- fixed route service expenses increased 6.99 percent
- route deviated service expenses increased 30.46 percent
- demand response service expenses increased 6.93 percent
- vanpool service expenses increased 4.76 percent
- passenger ferry service expenses increased 6.31 percent
- commuter rail service expenses increased 38.57 percent

Comparing the increases in 2005 from previous operating expense levels in 2004, some increases in service types have not necessarily led to overall increases in percentage share of operating expenditures. Using fixed route as an example, operating expenses increased in 2005, but represents an overall lower percentage share of total operating expenses; 54 percent in 2004 compared to 46 percent in 2005. The percentage share of expenditures rose from 34 percent in 2004 to 42 percent in 2005, reflecting the large capital costs of construction by the large urban systems. Sound Transit drove this statewide increase

with capital expenditures 346 percent over 2004, due to multiple construction projects. Construction projects are discussed further in Sound Transit's system snapshot.

The chart, *Total Expenditures and Obligations in 2005*, illustrates the percentage shares.

Total Expenditures and Obligations in 2005



Performance Measures for Public Transportation

RCW 35.58.2796 mandates that public transportation have measurable goals of its performance. The performance measures are as follows:

- Passenger trips per revenue vehicle hour
- Passenger trips per revenue vehicle mile
- Operating costs per revenue vehicle hour
- Operating costs per revenue vehicle mile
- Operating costs per passenger trip
- Farebox recovery

The following performance measures reflect statewide data that is grouped according to size of communities served by transit agencies; urban, small city, and rural. Individual performance measures for transit agencies are located at the end of each transit system profile.

Performance measures for this summary report are reported in averages. Since averages are a commonly understood method of communicating complex sets of data, they are used throughout the Summary of Public Transportation.

Passenger Trips per Revenue Vehicle Hour and Passenger Trips per Revenue Vehicle Mile

Public transportation agencies are able to measure their effectiveness through two similar performance measures, passenger trips per revenue vehicle hour and passenger trips per revenue vehicle mile. Large urban areas will typically have higher values on these performance measures due to several factors: Density of urban growth, frequency of bus operation, and size of buses.

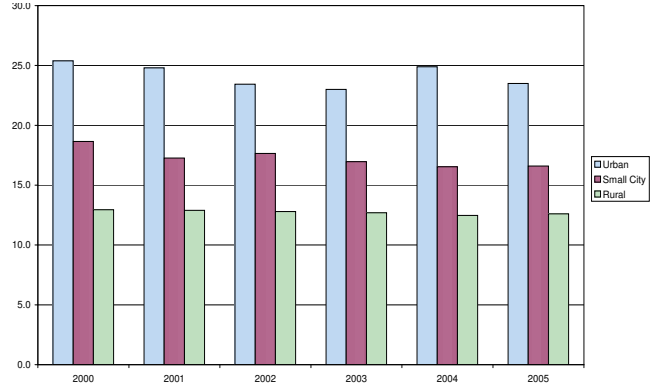
Passenger trips per revenue vehicle hour reflects the number of passengers a transit system transports in an hour of service, less the operating and administrative costs.

- In 2005, fixed route service outperformed the other service types due to dense urban population, larger buses, and higher frequency routes. Statewide, fixed routes served an average of 23.1 passengers per revenue vehicle hour of service. Small cities served an average of 20.8 passengers, and rural systems served an average of 19.1 passengers per revenue vehicle hour. These averages have decreased from 2004 service levels that served 24.6, 21.1, and 20.5 passengers per revenue vehicle hour, respectively. Despite lower averages in 2005, service levels illustrate a positive correlation to population size; the larger the population, the higher average number of passengers served.

- Route deviated services generally operate within smaller population areas, and in 2005 represented 6 rural systems and 1 small urban system. Statewide, performance measures for route deviated systems served 7.3 passengers per revenue vehicle hour. This is only a minor decrease from 2004 that served 7.5 passengers per revenue vehicle hour.
- Demand response services provide transportation needs for special needs populations. Demand response services operate within the different transit system sizes, and in 2005 served an average of 3.0 passengers per revenue vehicle hour. This is a slight increase from 2004 that served an average of 2.8 passengers per revenue vehicle hour.

Statewide trends of passenger trips per revenue vehicle hour data are illustrated on the following graph.

Passenger Trips per Vehicle Revenue Hour, 2000–2005



Passenger trips per revenue vehicle mile reflects the average number of passengers that a transit system transports per mile of service, less the operating and administrative costs. The performance measure, passenger trip per vehicle revenue mile also illustrates a positive correlation between system size and the population within the boundaries of a transit agency. Population, urban density, size of buses, and frequency of buses, all affect passenger trip per revenue vehicle mile data.

- In 2005, all fixed route services remained fairly stable from the previous year, resulting in urban averages of 1.6 passengers per revenue vehicle mile, small city averages of 1.3 passengers, and rural averages of 1.2 passengers per revenue vehicle mile. 2004 had similar data with averages of 1.6, 1.3, and 1.3 passengers per revenue vehicle mile, respectively.
- Route deviated services in 2005 maintained an average of 0.4 passengers per revenue vehicle mile from the previous year.
- Demand response services in 2005 followed a similar pattern of maintaining an average of 0.2 passengers per revenue vehicle mile from the previous year.
- Vanpool services increased slightly in 2005 to average 0.3 passengers per revenue vehicle mile. This is an increase from the average of 0.2 passengers in 2004.

Operating Costs per Revenue Vehicle Hour and Operating Costs per Revenue Vehicle Mile

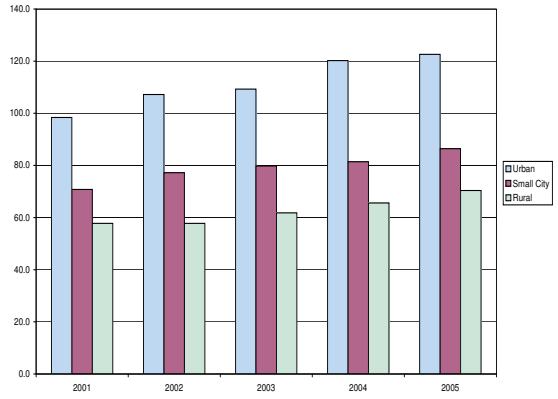
Other measures of efficiency for public transportation are the operating costs per revenue vehicle hour and operating costs per revenue vehicle mile. These performance measures account for administrative, fuel and labor, and maintenance costs in the overall operating expenses for a vehicle. The larger the transit system, the farther the vehicles travel, thereby consuming more fuel and requiring more labor to operate, affecting both revenue and service vehicles.

Operating costs per revenue vehicle hour reflects the overall operating costs per number of hours a transit system provides revenue service.

- Operating costs for fixed route services increased in 2005 to $102.34 per revenue vehicle hour, compared to $98.64 in 2004 for urban systems. Small city systems also saw operating costs increase to $93.47 from the previous year's average $90.28. Rural systems showed the only decrease for fixed route services with a decrease in 2005 to $71.45 per revenue vehicle hour from the previous year's average operating cost of $74.61 per revenue vehicle hour.
- Route deviated services in 2005 saw an increase in operating costs of $8.37 to average $70.68 per revenue vehicle hour; up from $62.31 in 2004. This represents a 13.43 percent increase in one year.
- Demand response services increased operating costs marginally in 2005 to average $65.59 per revenue vehicle hour. 2004 operating costs per revenue vehicle hour were $61.68; an increase of $3.91.

The graph, *Operating Costs per Revenue Hour, 2001-2005*, pictorially illustrates increasing costs as a function of revenue hours, according to system size.

Operating Costs per Vehicle Revenue Hour, 2001–2005



Operating Costs per Passenger Trip

Many different variables affect operating costs per passenger trip data. Often, passengers ride due to low fare rates (including those subsidized by employers and schools), superior marketing, or good service between origin and destination. Therefore, a low cost per passenger trip may be more representative of the system's use, just as a high cost per passenger trip might reflect higher fare rates, ineffective marketing, and/or less frequent service.

Operating costs per passenger trip reflects annual operating costs as a function of the number of passengers a transit system transports—less debt service, capital purchases, or typical transit costs such as rideshare coordination.

- Fixed route services experienced increases in operating costs per passenger trip across all system sizes. In 2005, urban systems average operating costs increased to $4.57 per passenger, up from $4.21 the previous year. Small city systems also saw an increase of average operating costs of $4.97 in 2005, up from $4.83 the previous year. Rural systems had increases in their average operating costs per passenger trip to $5.05 in 2005, up from $4.97 in 2004.
- Route deviated services increased their average operating costs per passenger trip in 2005 to $10.92 up from $8.98 in 2004; an increase of 21.60 percent.
- Demand response services continued the trend of increased average operating costs at $23.30 per passenger trip, up from average operating expenses of $22.78 per passenger trip in 2004.

Farebox Recovery/Vanpool Revenue Recovery

The largest indicator of farebox recovery is local policy. The lower farebox recovery rates that are typically seen in demand response services, are due to reduced fare, or fare-free policies that encourage ridership among special needs populations; elderly persons, and persons with disabilities. In addition, systems serving larger populations typically result in higher farebox recovery ratios.

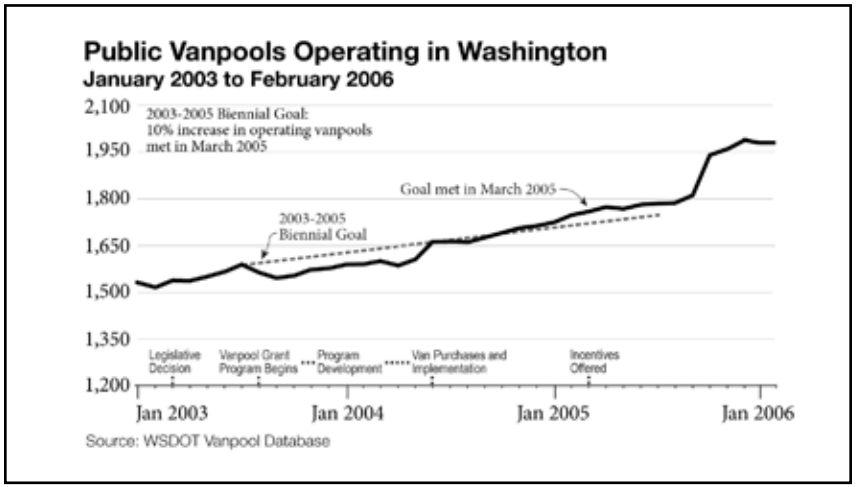
Farebox recovery is the percent of annual operating costs recovered by passengers paying fares for all transit services, except vanpools.

- Statewide, fixed route services recovered 12.92 percent of farebox revenue in 2005 as compared to 13.51 percent recovered in 2004.
- Farebox recovery for fixed route services in urban systems decreased slightly to 17.01 percent. Small city systems had a farebox recovery of 7.42 percent, and rural systems recovered 13.75 percent of fares in 2005. All of the different size systems recovered less in 2005 than in 2004, resulting in losses no greater than 0.82 percent, attributed to the rural systems.
- Route deviated services maintained the same farebox recovery rate of 5.15 percent in 2005.
- Demand response services yielded different results across the system sizes in 2005. Demand response services for urban and rural systems increased farebox recovery to 2.04 percent and 3.79 percent, up from 1.91 percent and 2.83 percent in 2004. Small city demand response showed a decrease in farebox recovery of 2.35 percent, down from 2.56 percent the previous year.

Vanpool recovery is unique in that the fees vanpool participants pay are used to cover the costs of operating the vanpool. In some instances, vanpool fees are expected to cover a portion of capital costs. All vanpool revenue recovery policy is established by the transit system's board of directors.

- Vanpool recovery increased in 2005 to 76.06 percent; up from 71.90 percent in 2004. Transit agencies use vanpool very differently, as is demonstrated by the wide ranging revenue recovery rates for the 16 transit agencies that provide vanpool services. Differences in recovery rates range from low, with 4.15 percent recovery at C-TRAN, to high, with 176.87 percent recovery at Yakima Transit. It should be noted that C-TRAN discontinued their vanpool program in 2005, where as Yakima Transit charges mileage in addition to monthly vanpooling fees.

The following graph illustrates the rising number of vanpool vehicles in service overlaid with goals established for the 2003-2005 biennium. The number of vanpools in service for March 2005 met the established goal, and drastically increased in the latter months of 2005 and beginning of 2006.



Public Transportation Performance Measures

Prepared by: Washington State Transit Association (WSTA)

This report measures the effectiveness of public transportation agencies from 1996 through 2004. These measures track several different areas of transit service performance among transit agencies, including: Average cost per total hour, cost per boarding, cost per passenger mile, and boardings per revenue hour. Performance measures are used for fixed route, demand response, and vanpool, and disaggregated according to system size when appropriate. However, data availability limited the use of measures for every service mode. The sources of data used by WSTA come from the *Summary of Public Transportation* and the *National Transit Database*.

> ***Note:*** The performance measures prepared by WSTA differ from the performance measures prepared for the *Summary of Public Transportation* due to different assumptions used. WSTA includes route deviated service in the fixed route category, whereas fixed route and route deviated services are reported separately in the *Summary of Public Transportation*. In addition, WSTA's analysis includes cost and operational data from each transit system in its original classification, whereas WSDOT reports them in their current federal classification. For example, Skagit Transit and Link Transit transitioned from rural areas to small urban/small city areas with the 2000 U.S. Census. WSTA elected to continue to calculate these two transit systems in the rural category for consistency in trend analysis and WSDOT reports them in their current federal classification of small urban/small city.

The following performance measures and graphs are from *The Gray Notebook*, June 30, 2006.

Transit Cost Efficiency Goal

The benchmark law required the Transportation Commission to establish a cost efficiency benchmark for the state's public transit agencies. To accomplish this mandate, the Commission worked with the Washington State Transit Association (WSTA), which proposed four measures to address cost efficiency, cost effectiveness, and service effectiveness. This report, prepared by WSTA, updates these four measures with 2004 data. The transit summary data for 2005 has not yet been finalized.

The four adopted benchmarks compile statewide averages for fixed-route (scheduled) service at urban, small urban, and rural transit agencies, and statewide averages for demand response (on-call paratransit) and vanpool services. This allows comparisons of the state's similar transit agencies with each other, although there are still important differences between the agencies. Identifying national peers for benchmarking is also difficult due to the large variations among systems in size, government support, fare levels, costs, and purposes, as well as data collection processes.

WSDOT's annual *Washington State Summary of Public Transportation Systems* provides an overview of each system and is a data source for the transit benchmarks calculated by WSTA. This report is available online at **www.wsdot.wa.gov/ Transit/**. The National Transit Database was used to calculate the passenger mile measure. Also, see the *Transportation Benchmarks Implementation Report* at **www.wsdot.wa.gov/accountability/benchmarks/BenchmarksImplementationReport.pdf** for more background on benchmark limitations, measure development, recent trends, and comparing services and system types.

Operating Cost per Total Hour

Costs are directly related to the size of the transit system and the nature of the area served. Larger transit systems are more complex and incur costs for fixed facilities (transit centers, park-and-ride lots, etc.), security, and other areas that are not cost items for smaller systems. They also operate larger equipment in metropolitan areas with higher wage structures than small systems. The 2004 data shows a modest increase in cost per hour for urban systems with a significant increase in the cost per hour for small urban and rural systems.

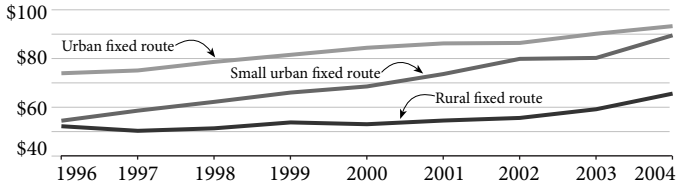
A closer review of the data indicates this increase reflects significant cost increases at two of the six agencies in the small urban category, Whatcom Transit (24 percent increase) and Kitsap Transit (15 percent increase). In 2004, Kitsap Transit has experienced a significant increase of approximately $2.0 million, or 10 percent, in its operating cost, primarily due to increased operating costs related to salaries and wages, benefits and fuel. The increase at Whatcom Transit has been traced preliminarily to the fact that 2003 was its first full year with maintenance "in-house"; previously it had contracted the work from the City of Bellingham.

Among the rural systems, increases at Mason Transit (25 percent) and Jefferson Transit (97.7 percent) drove the increased numbers. During this time, Mason Transit's operations were being brought in-house from a private operator, requiring a duplication of costs for several months. Mason Transit also purchased a new operating facility and renovated it, incurring a number of one-time costs. Many of these costs were classified as operating rather than capital costs.

The average cost per hour for demand-response service increased slightly in 2004. The cost per hour has remained stable over several years despite inflationary pressure.

Fixed Route Service: Average Cost per Hour

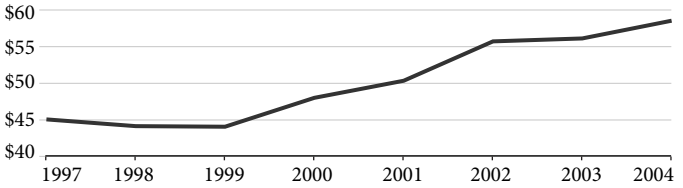
Washington State Average by Transit System Size, 1996-2004



Source: Washington State Transit Association

Demand Response Services: Average Cost per Total Hour

Washington State Average for All Transit Systems, 1997-2004



Source: Washington State Transit Association

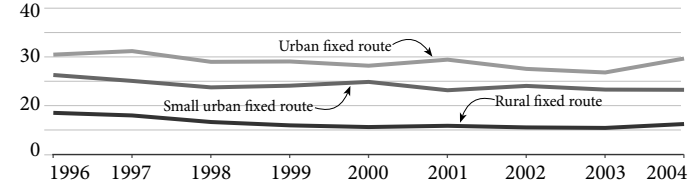
Boardings per Revenue Hour

This measure also illustrates the importance of the characteristics of the area served on a transit system's performance. Boardings[1] per revenue hour generally depend on density and service type—local, urban service performs better than express service.

Boardings per revenue hour increased by over 10 percent for urban systems and over 6 percent for small urban systems. The increase for the urban category is driven by King County Metro, which experienced an increase of approximately 15 percent in boardings despite a reduction in revenue hours. In this same time, rural fixed-route ridership per hour increased slightly, and demand response ridership per hour dropped slightly. These changes are both fairly negligible.

Fixed Route Service: Average Boardings per Revenue Hour

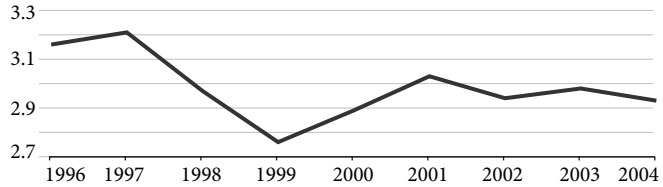
Washington State Average by Transit System Size, 1996-2004



Source: Washington State Transit Association

Demand Response Services: Average Boardings per Revenue Hour

Washington State Average for All Transit Systems, 1996-2004



Source: Washington State Transit Association

[1]"Boardings" are the total number of times a person boards the bus. For example, a person taking one bus and transferring to anothers bus to reach his destination would represent two boardings.

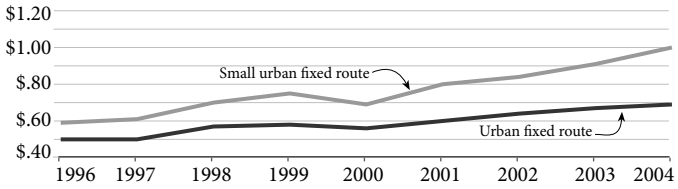
Cost per Passenger Mile

The trend for this measure generally reflects inflationary cost increases. The cost per passenger-mile increased sharply for small urban systems from 2000 to 2001, due to significant service reductions and fare increases in 2000 by several systems in this category. Passenger-mile data is not collected by rural transit systems.

The cost per passenger mile increased slightly for urban systems and appear to have increased for small urban systems.[2] Since data is incomplete for the small urban figures, there is no analysis available yet to explain this increase.

Fixed Route Service: Average Cost per Passenger Mile

Washington State Average by Transit System Size, 1996-2004



Source: Washington State Transit Association

Cost per Boarding

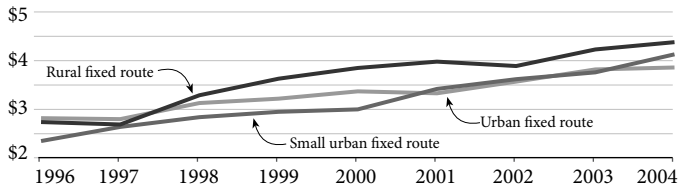
Fixed Route Service

Cost per boarding has increased at approximately the rate of inflation for urban systems. Rural and small urban systems have seen the cost per boarding increase at a much higher rate. Small urban systems saw a significant increase from 2000 to 2001 as service reductions increased the cost per hour of service and higher fares led to fewer passengers. This leveled off from 2001 to 2002. Rural systems faced inflation also and were hit particularly hard by increased health care and other employee costs.

The 2004 cost per boarding increase was relatively modest across the three system size categories. Significant cost increases seen in the small urban category were partially offset by increased ridership.

Fixed Route Service: Average Cost per Boarding

Washington State Average by Transit System Size, 1996-2004



Source: Washington State Transit Association

[2]The NTD did not have passenger-mile data for Ben Franklin Transit and Intercity Transit for 2004. The Small Urban number is a projected ratio based on the assumption that passenger miles would grow at the same rate as passengers from 2004 and 2003.

Demand Response

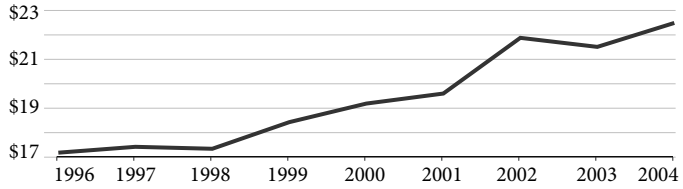
The cost per boarding is driven by two factors – the cost of providing service and the number of boardings. While the cost per hour of demand-response service has decreased slightly, this has been offset by a small but proportionately larger reduction in boardings per hour from 2003 (3.0) to 2004 (2.8).

This was caused by policy decisions at a number of transit systems to move demand-response riders to fixed-route service by offering them travel training on how to ride fixed-route transit. This shift helps riders achieve more travel flexibility and does not require advanced reservations. In addition, several transit agencies reduced their demand response service boundaries to be more consistent with the federally required three quarters of a mile on either side of a fixed route, and implemented disability standards that included conditional or limited eligibility for the demand response services.

The net result of these changes is that the cost per boarding for demand response service has increased slightly.

Demand Response Services: Average Cost per Boarding

Washington State Average for All Transit Systems, 1996-2004



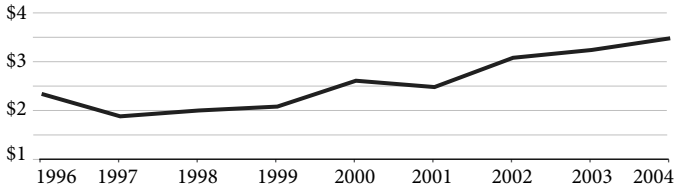
Source: Washington State Transit Association

Vanpooling

The cost-effectiveness of vanpooling is particularly impressive when one considers average trip lengths, and that in many systems the vanpool passenger fares cover a substantial portion of the operating and capital cost of the program. Some systems choose to subsidize vanpool fares to make the service as attractive as possible. The 2004 operating cost per boarding was approximately 10 percent higher than in 2003. The operating costs are influenced by a variety of factors, including fuel costs, insurance, inflation, and Transit Board policies. These factors are believed to have driven the increase from 2003 to 2004.

Vanpool Service: Average Cost per Boarding

Washington State Average for All Transit Systems, 1996-2004



Source: Washington State Transit Association

Notes On Data Sources and Assumptions

The sources of the data used in this report are:

- The *Washington State Summary of Public Transportation*. This report is published annually by the Washington State Department of Transportation, Public Transportation and Rail Division. This summary is required by Section 35.58.2796 RCW, to provide uniform data to transit providers, the Legislative Transportation Committee, and local and regional governments.
- The National Transit Database. The Federal Transit Administration collects data from each public transit agency and publishes it in the National Transit Database. This is the source of the passenger-mile data used in this report.

The cost, revenue, and ridership data for Sound Transit express bus service are reported with the data of the public transportation agency that operates the service. Other Sound Transit revenue and expense data (commuter rail, light rail, etc.) are not included in this report.

The data in this report are not adjusted for inflation.